Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner consider the above requested preliminary amendment prior to the issuance of a first Office Action on the merits.

Respectfully submitted,

FINNEGAN, HENDERSON, FARABOW, GARRETT & DUNNER, L.L.P.

Bv:

Christopher W. D

Reg. Nd. 43,944

Dated: January 5, 2001

LAW OFFICES
FINNEGAN, HENDERSON,
FARABOW, GARRETT,
& DUNNER, L. L. P.
1300 I STREET, N. W.
WASHINGTON, DC 20005
202-408-4000